



Department of Justice

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Tampa Orlando
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 19, 2010
<http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/flm/pr>

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**PASCO COUNTY ARMED CAREER CRIMINAL SENTENCED
TO 25 YEARS IN MURDER-FOR-HIRE SCHEME**

Tampa, FL - U.S. Attorney A. Brian Albritton announces that U.S. District Judge Steven D. Merryday today sentenced Joseph Lee Musson (age 32, of Hudson) to 25 years in federal prison for using interstate commerce facilities in the commission of murder-for-hire, using or carrying a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence, and possessing a firearm after a felony conviction. Musson was sentenced as an Armed Career Criminal because of his four prior convictions for sale of cocaine, ecstasy, and marijuana. He had pleaded guilty on January 28, 2010.

According to Court documents, the Pasco County Sheriff's Office arrested Musson in July 2009 after he sold 100 MDMA (ectasy) pills to a confidential informant. Musson then learned the informant's identity and planned to have him killed.

In September 2009, a source told detectives in Pasco and Pinellas Counties that Musson had approached him in August to kidnap the informant and "put a bullet" in his head to ensure that he did not show up for Musson's MDMA trial. Musson provided the source with a color photo of the informant and the informant's home address.

Detectives proceeded to make numerous recorded contacts between the cooperating source and Musson. On September 15, 2009, the source contacted Musson

to discuss the murder. Musson then met the source outside of Musson's sister's house and gave him a .45 caliber handgun to kill the informant. Musson also discussed with the source the payment for the murder - - three ounces of cocaine, speakers, a dirt bike, and \$1000.

After learning of the investigation into the murder-for-hire, Musson fled the area and became the "Pasco County Sheriff's Office's Most Wanted Fugitive." He was later apprehended in Las Vegas and returned to the Middle District of Florida.

This case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Pasco County Sheriff's Office and the Pinellas County Sheriff's Office. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jeffrey S. Downing.